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13. The pre-loaded spring mechanism of claim 11, wherein the piezoelectric device comprises a pre-stressed bender actuator.

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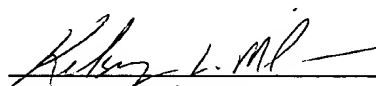
16. The method of claim 14 wherein the piezoelectric device comprises a pre-stressed bender actuator.

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the present application. Applicants thank the Examiner for his careful consideration of this application. Claims 2, 9, 13, and 16 are amended. Accompanying this Response is a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.131 swearing behind the cited reference, namely, U.S. Patent 6,140,745 issued to Bryant.

Applicant respectfully submits that this Declaration and its supporting documents overcome the rejection of claims 1-19. It is respectfully urged that the instant application is patentable and is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that an interview would facilitate an early disposal of the application, Applicant's undersigned attorney invites a telephone call at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,



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**Marked Up Copy of Amendments pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121**

Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR ADJUSTING THE PRE-LOAD OF A SPRING  
Application No. 09/783,367  
Attorney Docket No. 99-617

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the piezoelectric device comprises a  
[thermally] pre-stressed bender actuator.

10. The combination of claim 8 wherein the piezoelectric device comprises a  
[thermally] pre-stressed bender actuator.

14. The pre-loaded spring mechanism of claim 11, wherein the piezoelectric  
device comprises a [thermally] pre-stressed [bending] bender actuator.

16. The method of claim 14 wherein the piezoelectric device comprises a  
[thermally] pre-stressed bender actuator.